Nigella's cooking is all about having fun in the kitchen--taking pleasure in the entire process and relishing the outcome. Check out some of Nigella's mouthwatering recipes and find out what it takes to be a "domestic goddess."

Family Food
Tagliatelle with Chicken from the Venetian Ghetto

Fast Food
Lemon Linguine

Party Girl
Lilac or Chocolate-Topped Cupcakes

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Thai Yellow Pumpkin and Seafood Curry

Rainy Day
Pasta with Meatballs

Supper Time
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Salmon Fishcakes

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Roast Beef with Yorkshire Pudding

Christmas Special
Certosino Cake

Home Alone
Lamb with Garlicky Tahini

Entertaining
Caesar Salad

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Join celebrated author and television host Nigella Lawson for a fun, innovative cooking show that teaches you how to achieve maximum pleasure with minimum effort.

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this week

Nigella Bites: Some Like It Hot

Find out why Nigella Lawson is the most recognized culinary personality and the U.K.'s most beautiful woman with our exclusive photo gallery. And don't forget to tune in for some more encore presentations of *Nigella* this week on **style** and E!.

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see it on style.

Encore: Apr. 13, 8 p.m., 11 p.m.; Apr. 14, 9 a.m., 2:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m.; Apr. 15, 2 p.m.; Apr. 16, 9:30 p.m., 12:30 a.m.; Apr. 17, 11:30 a.m.; Apr. 18, 8 p.m., 11 p.m.; Apr. 19, 8:30 a.m.; Apr. 20, 12 p.m. ET

see it on E!

Encore: Apr. 18, 9 a.m.

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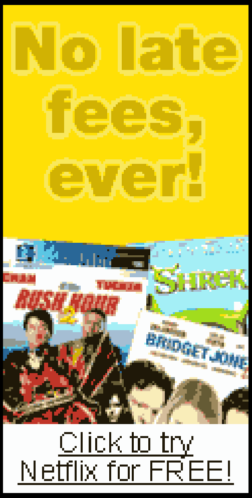

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How can I make a salad that stays fresh and crisp? Should I use something other than lettuce?
Amy Sckittone, Galveston, Texas

There is no magic answer to a crisp salad. Once it has been out of the fridge and dressed, all lettuces will loose their crispy crunch if not served at the last minute. The salad I love, which gives maximum bite and flavour after languishing on a table for some time, is a bulb-fennel salad. Slice it and dress with olive oil, lemon juice and good-quality salt. It will keep crisp for longer than any other salad!

One of your dessert recipes calls for cornflower. I cannot find it in stores. Is there an alternative? (Love your show!)
Kristie, Mt. Holly, New Jersey

I think you are talking about cornflour, which is most commonly used as a thickening agent in sauces. I also use it to give sponge cakes a lighter texture, and also it's an essential ingredient in pavlova. It gives it that delicious marshmallow quality in the middle. In the U.S., it is known as cornstarch.

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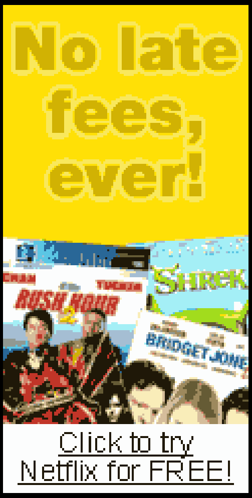

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Nigella Bites Host Nigella Lawson

Successful, prolific journalist and broadcaster Nigella Lawson has been described as Britain's "It Girl." One of England's most recognized culinary personalities and the U.K.'s most beautiful woman, Lawson now takes on America, as her extremely popular cooking and lifestyle series *Nigella Bites*, a smash hit on Britain's Channel 4, premieres in the U.S. November 2001 on the **style** network and E! Entertainment Television.

Lawson began her career writing the restaurant review column for *The Spectator* while on staff of the *Sunday Times*. She eventually became the publication's deputy literary editor. Her writing led to her current post as food editor of the British version of *Vogue* and her makeup column for *Times Magazine*. She also writes for *Evening Standard*, *The Guardian* and *Daily Telegraph* in the U.K. and for *Gourmet* and *Bon Appetit* magazines in the U.S.

With her unique and refreshing approach to cookery, Lawson's motto is simple: "To achieve maximum pleasure through minimum effort." Her first book, *How to Eat: The Pleasures and Principles of Good Food* (1998), was the basis for her popular TV series *Nigella Bites*. Her second book, *How to Be a Domestic Goddess*, published in the U.K. in fall 2000, became an instant bestseller. (Hyperion will publish the book in the U.S. November 2001.)

Not a stranger to the public eye, Lawson is the daughter of Nigel Lawson, who served as Margaret Thatcher's Chancellor of the Exchequer, ranking second most powerful person in the government at the time. Lawson is also the widow of John Diamond, a popular British TV host and journalist. She has one daughter, Cosima, and son, Bruno.

Awards and Prizes:

- Guild of Food Writers 2001: Cookery Book of the Year, *How to Be a Domestic Goddess*
- WH Smith Book Awards 2001: Lifestyle Book of the Year, *How to Be a Domestic Goddess*
- British Book Awards 2000: Author of the Year
- British Book Awards 1998: Illustrated Book of the Year, *How to Eat: The Pleasures and Principles of Good Food*

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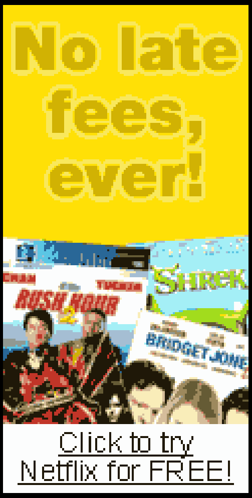

Cookin' School: The Domestic Goddess Gets in the Mix

Sneak a peek at the dish diva in action, as Nigella Lawson gives you a guided tour into her kitchen with this photo gallery.

And don't forget to tune in to **style** and E! to watch Britain's It girl and most recognized culinary personality do what she does best--cook!

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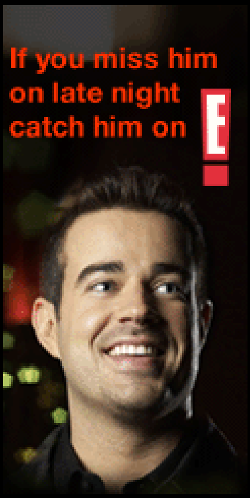

Family Food: Tagliatelle with Chicken from the Venetian Ghetto

ingredients

3 1/2-pound chicken
2 tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and freshly milled black pepper
Leaves from 3 rosemary sprigs, minced
1/3 cup of sultanas, soaked in warm water for 30 minutes
1/2 cup of pine nuts, lightly toasted
1 pound of tagliatelle
2-3 tablespoons of chopped parsley

directions

Preheat the oven to 350° F.

Rub the chicken with the oil and sprinkle with the salt and pepper--then place it breast-down in a roasting pan and roast for about 1 1/2 hours or until well browned, turning it over toward the end to brown the breast. It's done when the juices run clear--not pink--when you cut into the thigh. When the chicken's nearly ready, put abundant water on for the pasta, salting it when it boils.

Take the chicken out of the oven and take the meat off the bone, leaving all that glorious burnished skin on, and cut it into small pieces. I do much of this by just pulling without a knife, but if you haven't got asbestos hands, use a knife and fork or wait till it's cooler.

For the sauce, pour all the juices from the roasting pan into a saucepan. Add the rosemary, the drained sultanas and the pine nuts. Begin to simmer the sauce when you're ready to cook the pasta.

Cook and drain the pasta and toss it with the sauce, chicken pieces and parsley in a large warmed bowl. No cheese, please.

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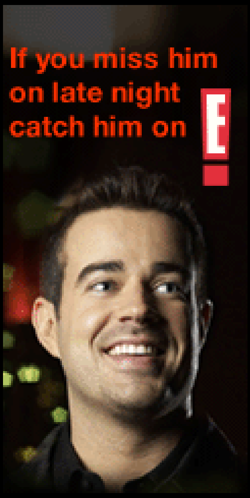

ingredients

Fast Food: Lemon Linguine

2 pounds of linguine
2 egg yolks
2/3 cup of heavy cream
1/2 cup of freshly grated parmesan
Zest of 1 lemon and juice of 1/2, plus more juice if needed
Pinch of salt
Freshly milled black pepper
4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) of unsalted butter
2-3 tablespoons of chopped parsley

directions

Fill just about the biggest pot you have with water and bring to a boil. When friends are coming for lunch, get the water heated to boiling point before they arrive, otherwise you end up nervously hanging around waiting for a watched pot to boil, while your supposedly quick lunch gets later and later. Bring the water to a boil, cover and turn off the burner.

I tend to leave the addition of salt until the water's come to a boil a second time. But whichever way you do it, add quite a bit of salt. When the bubbling's encouragingly fierce, put in the pasta. I often put the lid on for a moment or so just to let the pasta get back to a boil. But don't turn your back on it--give it a good stir with a pasta fork to avoid even the suspicion of stickiness once you've removed the lid.

Then get on with the sauce, making sure you've set your timer for about a minute or so less than the time specified on the package of pasta.

In a bowl, put the yolks, cream, parmesan, zest of the whole lemon and juice of a hair of it, the salt and a good grind of pepper and beat with a fork. You don't want it fluffy, just combined. Taste. If you want it more lemony, then, of course, add more juice.

When the timer goes off, taste to judge how near the pasta is to being ready. I recommend that you hover by the stove, so you don't miss that point. Don't be too hasty, though. Everyone is so keen to cook their pasta properly al dente that sometimes the pasta is actually not cooked enough. You want absolutely no chalkiness here. And linguine tends not to become soggy and overcooked quite as quickly as other long pastas (or at least I find it so). This makes sense, of course, as the strands of "little tongues" are denser than the flat ribbon shapes.

Anyway, as soon as the pasta looks ready, remove a cup of the cooking liquid and drain the pasta. And then, off the heat, toss it back in the pot or put it in an efficiently preheated bowl. Throw in the butter and stir and swirl about to make sure the butter's melted and the pasta is covered all over. Each strand will be only mutely gleaming, as there's not much butter and quite a bit of pasta. If you want to add more, then do.

When you're satisfied that the pasta's covered with its soft slip of butter, stir in the egg mixture and turn the pasta well in it, adding some of the cooking liquid if it looks a bit dry. (Only 2 tablespoons or so--you don't want a wet mess--and only after you think the sauce is incorporated.) Sprinkle over the parsley and serve.

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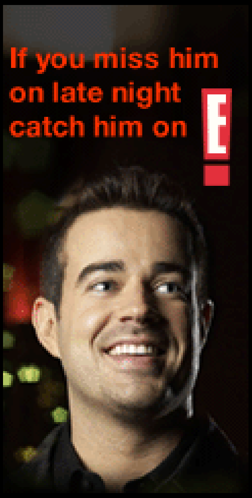

ingredients

Party Girl: Lilac or Chocolate-Topped Cupcakes

For cupcakes:
3/4 cup of self-rising flour
1/2 cup of very soft unsalted butter
7 tablespoons of granulated sugar
2 eggs
1-2 teaspoons of vanilla extract
Few tablespoons of whole milk

For icing:
Approximately 1 1/4 cup of confectioner's sugar (sifted) or instant royal icing
Food-coloring paste
Gold chocolate buttons (or M&Ms)
12-cup cupcake pan or 3 by 12-inch mini cupcake pans, with appropriately sized paper baking cups

directions

Preheat oven to 400° F. Put all ingredients for the cupcakes (except the milk) into a food processor and blitz furiously. Then pour in the milk and process again until you have a smooth batter. Divide the mixture between either the big muffin pans or the three small pans.

Cook the big cupcakes for about 15-20 minutes and the small ones for about 10 minutes--although you might need to keep a closer eye on the little ones. Cool the cupcakes on a wire rack.

To ice the mini cupcakes, mix the confectioner's sugar with a tablespoon or two of water from a recently boiled kettle or cold water (according to package information) for instant royal icing until you have a smooth, spreadable paste. In both cases, add water slowly. (You don't want this runny, and nothing is more irritating than having to start sifting more sugar.) The merest, tiniest blob of food-coloring paste (in this case, as I said, grape violet) will be enough to bring a dizzy and rich-toned intensity to the proceedings; you can always add more coloring if you want, but again, the important thing is to guard against having to do any more sifting. And if you have been too heavy-handed and landed yourself with a batch of unusable dark icing, then just make up some more plain white icing and add to tone down.

Slice any peaking humps off the tops of the cakes with a sharp knife. Then, from a dunked-in spoon, pour the icing over each cake until the tops are thickly and smoothly covered. Let stand for a couple of minutes until the icing has set a tiny bit. Then dot a gold button or other decoration of your choice on top.

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TV Dinners: Thai Yellow Pumpkin and Seafood Curry

ingredients

14 ounces canned coconut milk
1-2 tablespoons yellow (or red) Thai curry paste
1 1/2 c of fish stock (I use boiling water and concentrated fish bouillon; Cubes would do.)
3 tablespoons of fish sauce
2 tablespoons of sugar
3 lemongrass stalks, each cut into three and bruised with the flat of a knife
3 lime leaves, stalked and cut into strips
1/2 teaspoon of turmeric
2 1/4 pounds of pumpkin (or butternut squash) peeled and cut into large bite-size chunks
18 ounces of salmon fillet, preferably organic, skinned and cut into large bite-size chunks
18 ounces of peeled raw shrimp
Bok choi or any other green vegetables of your choice
Juice of 1/2 lime--use up to a full lime to taste
Cilantro, to serve

directions

Skim the creamy top off the can of coconut milk and put it--over medium heat--into a large saucepan or casserole with the curry paste. Let it sizzle and (using a fork, whisk or wooden spoon) beat milk and paste together until combined. Still beating gently, add the rest of the coconut milk, fish stock, fish sauce, sugar, lemongrass, lime leaves and turmeric. Bring to a boil and then add the pumpkin. Cook on a fast simmer until the pumpkin is tender (about 15 minutes). Different sorts of pumpkins can vary enormously in the time they take to cook; Some squash takes as little as five minutes.

As I mentioned, you can cook the curry up till this part in advance, maybe leaving the pumpkin with a tiny bit of bite to it. (It will soften and cook as the pan cools.) Either way, when you're about five minutes away from wanting to eat, get ready to cook the seafood.

So, to the robustly simmering pan, add the salmon and shrimp. (If you are using frozen shrimp, they'll need to go in before the salmon.) When the salmon and shrimp have cooked, which shouldn't take more than three to four minutes, stir in any green vegetable you're using--sliced, chopped or shredded as suits--and tamp down with a wooden spoon. When the bok choi's wilted, squeeze in the juice of half a lime, stir and taste and add the juice of the remaining half, if you feel it needs it. Take the pan off the heat or decant the curry into a large bowl and sprinkle over the cilantro. The point is that the cilantro goes in just before serving. Serve with more chopped cilantro for people to add to their own bowls as they eat--and some plain Thai or basmati rice.

Serves four to six people.

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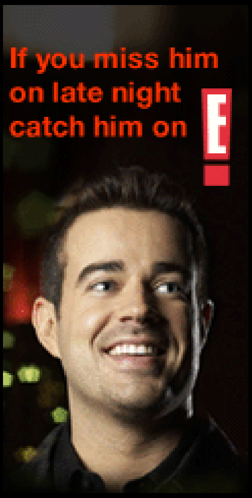

Rainy Days: Pasta with Meatballs

ingredients

For the meatballs:
9 ounces of minced pork
9 ounces of minced beef
1 egg
2 tablespoons of freshly grated parmesan
1 garlic clove, minced
1 teaspoon of dried oregano
3 tablespoons of fine bread crumbs
Good grind of black pepper
1 teaspoon of salt

For tomato sauce:
1 onion
2 cloves of garlic
1 teaspoon of dried oregano
1 tablespoon of unsalted butter
1 tablespoon of olive oil (not extra-virgin)
24 ounces of canned tomatoes in puree
Pinch of sugar
Salt and pepper
1/3 cup plus 1 tablespoon of whole milk

directions

For the meatballs:
Just put everything in a large bowl and then, using your hands, mix to combine before shaping into small balls. Place the meatballs on baking sheets or plates lined with plastic wrap and put each in the refrigerator as you finish them.

For tomato sauce:
Put the onion, garlic and oregano into the processor and blitz to a pulp. Heat the butter and oil in a deep, wide pan and then scrape the onion-garlic mix into it and cook over low to medium heat for about 10 minutes. Don't let the mixture catch; just let it become soft. Add the tomatoes and then add about 3/4 cup of cold water to the pan with the pinch of sugar and some salt and pepper and cook for about 10 minutes. The tomato sauce will appear thin at this stage, but don't worry, as it will thicken a little later. Stir in the milk and then drop the meatballs in one by one. Don't stir the pan until the meatballs have turned from pink to brown, as you don't want to break them up. Cook everything for about 20 minutes, with the lid only partially covering it. At the end of cooking time, check the seasoning, as you may want more salt and a grind or two more of pepper.

Makes enough to generously serve six people.

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Supper Time: Lamb Shank Stew

ingredients

6 Tbsp of peanut or vegetable oil
8 lamb shanks
2 onions
4 cloves of garlic
Sprinkling of salt
1 Tbsp turmeric
1 tsp ground ginger
1 dried red chili pepper, crumbled, or 1/4 tsp dried red-pepper flakes
2 tsp of cinnamon
1/4 tsp of freshly grated nutmeg
Black pepper
3 Tbsp of honey
1 Tbsp of soy sauce
3 Tbsp of Marsala wine
6 Tbsp of red lentils

directions

To serve:

3 Tbsp of chopped pistachios, chopped blanched almonds or a mixture of both.

Put 3 Tbsp of the oil into a very large, wide, heavy-bottomed pan and warm over medium heat. Brown the lamb shanks--in batches--in the pan and then remove to a roasting pan or whatever else you've got at hand to sit them in.

Peel the onions and garlic and process in a food processor or chop them finely by hand. Add the remaining oil to the pan and fry the onion-garlic mush until soft, sprinkling salt over to stop it from sticking.

Stir in the turmeric, ground ginger, chili, cinnamon and nutmeg and season with some freshly ground pepper. Stir again, adding the honey, soy sauce and Marsala. Put the shanks back in the pan, add cold water almost to cover, bring to the boil and then put a lid on the pan, lower the heat and simmer very gently for 1-1 1/2 hours, or until the meat is tender. Add the red lentils and cook for about 20 minutes longer without the lid, until the lentils have softened into the sauce, and the juices have reduced and thickened slightly. Check for seasoning.

Toast the nuts by heating them for a few minutes in a dry frying pan and sprinkle onto the lamb as you serve it. This aromatic, sauce-rich stew can be served with plain rice or a bowl of butter-mashed potatoes, half potatoes and half parsnips, well-seasoned and spiced with mace.

Serves six people.

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ingredients

Slow-Cook Weekend: Peppers with Feta and Almonds

8 red or yellow peppers or a mixture of both
4 ounces of feta
Couple of squeezes of lemon juice
1 tablespoon of extra-virgin olive oil
1/3 cup of blanched or flaked almonds
2 tablespoon of freshly chopped flat-leaf parsley

directions

Preheat the broiler as hot as you can get it. Then sit the peppers on a rack below. When the skin turns black and blistery, turn them; you want to char them on every side. You can do this on a stove just by holding them with a long fork over the burner, but it can get tiresome to say the least. When peppers are black and charred, remove them to a large bowl and cover immediately with plastic wrap. Leave for 10-20 minutes.

Uncover and (one by one) peel and seed the peppers. Don't get worried if the odd bit of skin (or seed) remains. Cut or tear into wide chunks/strips and arrange on a large plate. Crumble over the feta and then squeeze over lemon juice and drizzle with oil. Scatter over the almonds and sprinkle on the parsley--and that, frankly, is it.

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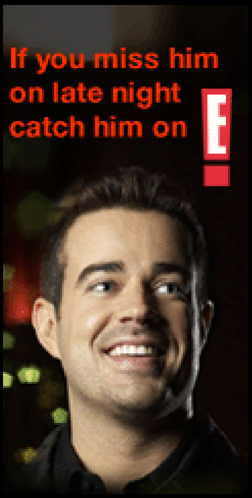

Legacy: Chocolate Chestnut Refrigerator Cake

ingredients

18 ounces of sweetened chestnut puree
3/4 cup of soft, unsalted butter
11 ounces of bittersweet chocolate, minimum 70 percent cocoa solids
3 tablespoons of dark rum

To serve:
Crème fraîche
Crystallized violets

directions

Beat the puree in a bowl until it's smooth. Then add the butter, beating again to make a well-blended mixture. Melt the chocolate and let it cool slightly, before adding it to the chestnuts and butter in the bowl. Beat in the rum and spoon the chocolate mixture into a 8 1/2 by 4 1/2-inch loaf tin, lined with plastic wrap, in two batches, making sure the first layer reaches the corners and sides of the bottom of the pan, before you smooth over the rest. Wrap the over-hanging plastic wrap over the cake, so that it's completely covered. Put it in the refrigerator to set for at least four hours--but a day or so in advance if you want.

Don't take the loaf pan out of the refrigerator until you want to eat it. When you just unmold the cake, cut it into thin slices and serve with *crème fraîche* or sour cream.

Makes 10-12 servings.

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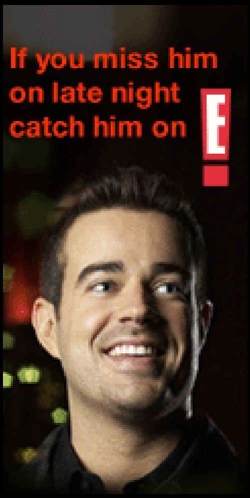

Temple Food: Hot and Sour Soup

ingredients

6 1/2 cups chicken stock
1 heaping tablespoon Tom Yam hot and sour paste
4 Kaffir lime leaves, finely chopped
1 stick of lemongrass (tender inner part only), roughly chopped
Juice of 1 lime
4 tablespoons fish sauce
3 small fresh red or green chilies, finely chopped
1 teaspoon sugar
1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons straw or button mushrooms, halved or quartered according to size
18 ounces peeled, raw shrimp (thawed if frozen)
5 small scallions, cut into short strips
Small bunch cilantro, chopped

directions

Heat the stock and Tom Yam paste in a decent-sized saucepan with the lime leaves, lemongrass, lime juice, fish sauce, chilies and sugar. Bring to the boil, add the mushrooms and simmer for a couple of minutes. Then add the shrimp and scallions and cook for a further two to three minutes, or until the shrimps are cooked but still tender. Sprinkle with a little cilantro and put more on the table for people to add themselves if they want.

Serves four to six people.

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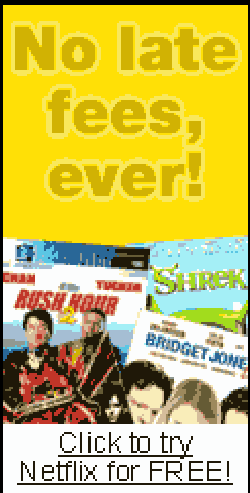

Trashy: Ham in Coca-Cola

ingredients

4 1/4-4 1/2 pound bone-in fresh ham
1 onion, peeled and cut in half
2-liter bottle of Coca-Cola

For the glaze:
Handful of cloves
1 heaping tablespoon of molasses
2 teaspoons of English mustard powder
2 tablespoons of granulated brown sugar

directions

One thing before you start: Don't even consider using Diet Coke--it's full of sugar. If you know that you're dealing with a salty ham, put it in a pan covered with cold water, bring to the boil and then tip into a colander in the sink and start from here; otherwise, put the ham in a pan (skin-side down, if it fits like that), add the onion and then pour over the Coke. Bring to the boil, reduce to a good simmer, put the lid on (though not tightly) and cook for just under two-and-a-half hours. If your joint is larger or smaller, work out timing by reckoning on an hour for every two pounds, remembering that it's going to get a quick blast in the oven later. But do take into account that if the ham's been in the refrigerator right up to the moment you cook it, you will have to give it a good 15 minutes or so extra, so that the interior is properly cooked.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 500° F. When the ham's had its time, take it out of the pan (but do *not* throw away the cooking liquid) and let cool a little for ease of handling. (Indeed, you can let it cool completely and then finish off the cooking at some later stage if you want.) Then remove the skin, leaving a thin layer of fat. Score the fat with a sharp knife to make fairly large diamond shapes and stud each diamond with a clove. Then carefully spread the molasses over the bark-budded skin, taking care not to dislodge the cloves. Gently pat the mustard and sugar onto the sticky fat. Cook in a foil-lined roasting pan for approximately 10 minutes or until the glaze is burnished and bubbly. Should you want to do the braising stage in advance and then let the ham cool, clove and glaze it and give it 30-40 minutes, from room temperature, at 350° F, turning up the heat towards the end if you think it needs it.

Serves eight people.

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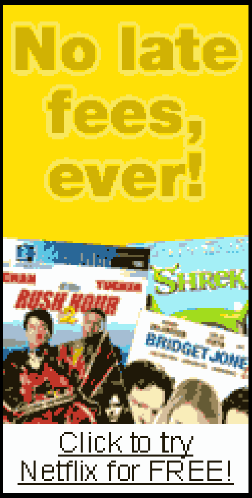

ingredients

All-Day Breakfast: Blackberry and Apple Kuchen

For the cake base:
2 1/4-2 2/3 cups of white bread flour
1/2 teaspoon of salt
2 tablespoons of sugar
Rapid yeast (about 1 teaspoon)
2 eggs
1/2 teaspoon of vanilla extract
Grated zest of half a lemon
1/4 teaspoon of ground cinnamon
1/2 cup of lukewarm milk
1/4 cup of butter, softened
13 by 9 inch jellyroll pan

For the topping:
1 egg beaten with a tablespoon of cream and a pinch of ground cinnamon
1 small or 1/2 medium-firm, tart apple (approx. 6 ounces in weight)
1 2/3 cups of blackberries
Zest of 1/2 a lemon
1/3 cups of self-rising flour
2 tablespoons of ground almonds
1/4 teaspoon of ground cinnamon
1/4 cups of cold unsalted butter, diced
2 tablespoons of granulated sugar
2 tablespoons of demerara sugar
2 tablespoons of flaked almonds

directions

Put 2 1/4 cups of the flour in a bowl with the salt, sugar and yeast. In another bowl, beat the eggs and add them (with the vanilla extract, lemon zest and cinnamon) to the lukewarm milk. Stir the liquid ingredients into the dry ingredients to make a medium-soft dough, being prepared to add more flour as necessary. I generally use about 2 1/3 cups in all, but I advise you to start off with the smaller amount--just add more as needed. Work in the soft butter and knead by hand for about 10 minutes--or half that time by machine. When the dough is ready, it will appear smooth and springy. It suddenly seems to plump up to glossy life.

Cover with a kitchen towel and leave till doubled in size (an hour to an hour and a quarter). Or, leave it to rise slowly in a cold place overnight. Then punch down and press to line a jellyroll pan measuring 13 by 9 inches. You may think it's never going to stretch to fit, but it will, although you may need to let it rest for 10 minutes or so mid-stretch, especially if the dough has had a cold rise. When it's pressed out on the pan, leave it to rest for 15-20 minutes and then brush with the cream and egg mixture.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 400° F. Peel and chop the apple and toss it in a bowl with the blackberries and the zest of the other half lemon. Set aside in the bowl for the few minutes it takes to make the crumble topping. Put the flour, ground almonds and cinnamon in a medium-size bowl, stir to combine and then add the cold, diced butter. Using the tips of your fingers--index and middle stroking the fleshy pads of your thumbs--rub it into the flour. Stop when you have a mixture that resembles clumpy oatmeal (this is a very buttery mixture). Fork in the sugars and flaked almonds.

Tumble the fruit over the egg-washed dough and then sprinkle the crumble on top of that. Put in the oven for 15 minutes and then turn down to 350° F and cook for a further 20 minutes or so, until the dough is swelling and golden at its billowing edges, and the crumble is set--don't expect it to be crunchy. Remove from the oven and, if you can, wait five minutes or so before cutting it into greed-satisfying slabs.

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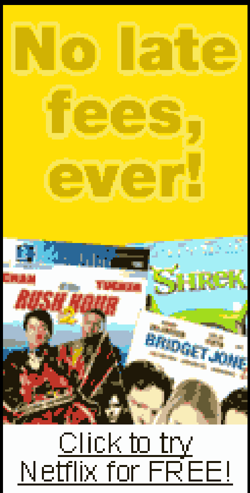

ingredients

Comfort Food: Salmon Fishcakes

For the fishcakes:
1 1/2-2 1/4 cold mashed potatoes
14-15 ounces of canned salmon, preferably organic
1 tablespoon of unsalted butter, melted (if the mashed potato hasn't got any butter in it)
Fat pinch of cayenne pepper
Grated zest of half a lemon
Salt and pepper
1 egg

For coating and frying:
2 eggs
1/2 cups of matzo meal, preferably medium
1/4 cups of unsalted butter
2 tablespoons of vegetable oil

directions

In a large bowl, mix together all the fishcake ingredients (preferably with your hands).

Cover a baking sheet with plastic wrap, plunge your hands back into the mixture and form fat, palm-sized patties. Place these on the baking sheet and put in the refrigerator to firm up for about 20 minutes to an hour--or considerably longer, if that helps.

Beat the eggs in a shallow soup bowl and sprinkle the matzo meal onto a dinner plate. One by one, dip the fishcakes into the beaten egg and then into the matzo meal, sprinkling and dredging over, as you help coat them. When you're done, put the butter and oil in a large frying pan, heat till it begins to fizzle and then fry the fishcakes on each side, until the crusts are golden and speckled brown in parts, and the soothing centers are warmed through.

Makes seven to nine three-inch diameter fishcakes.

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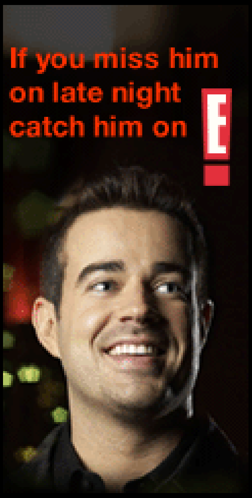

ingredients

Weekend: Roast Beef with Yorkshire Pudding

Roast Beef:
1 pound per person
Dry mustard

Yorkshire Pudding:
1 1/4 cups of milk
4 eggs
Scant 1/2 teaspoon of salt
Freshly milled black pepper
1 1/2 cups of all-purpose flour, sifted
1 tablespoon of beef dripping or vegetable oil to taste

directions

Roast Beef:
I think many people underplay how much meat you need. For six people, I wouldn't consider getting under five pounds, which, in other words, is about a pound per person. A roast is a sad prospect without the possibility of leftovers. For a rib, you should add on about two pounds extra here.

For rare meat, you can either cook the beef at 475° F for 15 minutes and then turn it down to 350° F for about 15 minutes per pound--or cook at 425° F throughout for about 15 minutes per pound. I usually do 15 minutes per pound and then add on an extra five minutes, so that those who don't like rare meat have a bit of slightly more cooked beef from the ends. Those who don't like blood don't have to get it; the rest of us gratifyingly do. Use a meat thermometer to determine doneness exactly. The internal temperature for rare beef is 120° F; for medium-rare, it is 125° F-130° F; for medium it is 140° F.

All I do to the beef is massage it with dry mustard powder after I've taken it out of the fridge. I use a knob of dripping for the pan, but you could use whatever fat or oil you have at hand.

Yorkshire Pudding:
The oven should be heated to 450° F. Mix the milk, eggs and salt and add pepper, beating all well together. I use my freestanding mixer, the fabulous KitchenAid™, but any hand-held electric mixer (rotary or balloon whisk) will do. Let these ingredients stand for 15 minutes and then whisk in the flour. Meanwhile, add the dripping to the pan and put it in the oven to heat for about 10 minutes. Into this intensely hot pan, you should put the batter and cook for 20 minutes or until well puffed and golden. Bring it, triumphant, to the table.

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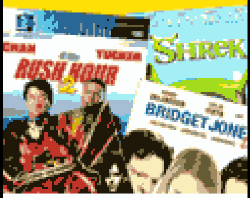

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ingredients

Christmas Special: Certosino Cake

1/3 cup of seedless raisins
2 tablespoons of Marsala
2 1/4 cup of all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons of flour
2 teaspoons of baking soda
1/2 cup plus 2 T of honey
1/2 cup of sugar
3 tablespoons of unsalted butter
3 tablespoons of water
1 tablespoons of anise or fennel seeds
1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon
2 medium-tart apples, roughly grated
3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons or 7 ounces of blanched almonds, coarsely chopped
Scant 1/4 cup of pine nuts
3 ounces of bittersweet chocolate, chopped
1/3 cup of walnuts, chopped
10-inch springform pan, buttered and lined with parchment or wax paper

Suggestions for decorating:
4 tablespoons of apricot jam to glaze pecan halves
Natural-colored glacé cherries
Blanched whole almonds
Marrons glacés
Glacé fruits

directions

Soak the raisins in the Marsala for 20 minutes and--while they're steeping--preheat the oven to 350°F. Measure the flour and baking soda out into a large bowl. Heat the honey, sugar, butter and water in a saucepan until the sugar dissolves. Add the anise or fennel seeds and cinnamon, then pour this mixture over the bowl of flour and stir to combine.

Mix in all the other ingredients--not forgetting the soaked raisins and their liquid. Then spoon into the pan and cook for about 45 minutes to an hour. Should you find that the cake needs that final 15 minutes, you may need to cover it with foil to stop it from scorching. When the cake has cooled, heat the apricot jam in a small pan and--using a pastry brush--paint most (but not all) of it over the top of the cake. This glaze gives it a sticky surface to which the fruits and so forth will adhere. Decorate with glacé fruits and nuts of your choice, leaving no gaps of cake visible on top. Brush with scant remaining glaze, so all looks burnished and shiny.

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Home Alone: Lamb with Garlicky Tahini

ingredients

1 onion
1 1/4 cup of extra-virgin olive oil
Zest of 1 lemon and juice of 2
1/4 teaspoon of ground cumin, plus more, for garnishing
10 lamb of noisettes, about 1 1/4 inches thick
8 tablespoons of tahini
4 garlic cloves, minced or pressed
1/2 teaspoon of coarse salt

directions

Put the onion into one large shallow dish in which the noisettes will fit in one layer--or divide the onion into two medium-to-large freezer bags. Add the oil, lemon zest and cumin (dividing equally, obviously, if you're using bags). Give a good stir and then add the lamb. Cover the dish or tie up the bags and leave, turning or squishing respectively at half time, as long as you've got--frankly, though, it should be for at least 10 minutes and preferably not in the fridge. Preheat the oven to 425° F and put a nonstick or cast-iron pan on the stove. Remove the noisettes from the marinade--you don't need to wipe them dry, just brush off the bits of onion. Sear each side for a minute or two, then transfer to a baking pan and then to the preheated oven. 10 minutes should be right for pink (but not bloody) lamb--you may need a bit longer if the meat started off very cold. You will need to check for yourself, obviously, and when cooked as you want, remove to a warmed plate.

For the sauce, put the tahini in a bowl and add the garlic and salt. Stir with a wooden spoon, adding the lemon juice as you do--it will seize up here, but don't worry, because it will loosen later. Slowly add some water (I find I can use about 1/2 cup), pouring from a measuring cup, so only a little goes in at a time--and keep stirring. When you have a smooth mixture--the consistency of heavy cream--stop adding water. Put into a bowl with a spoon and sprinkle with the additional ground cumin.

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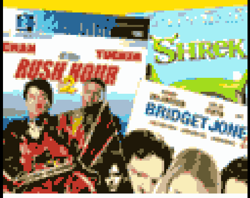

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ingredients

Entertaining: Caesar Salad

8 ounces of floury or boiling potatoes, peeled and diced
2-3 large garlic cloves, to taste, minced
About 6 tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil
2 eggs
Leaves from 4-6 heads baby romaine lettuce or 2-3 heads regular romaine
Pinch of salt, plus more, if needed
Freshly milled black pepper
Drops of Worcestershire sauce
Juice of 1 lemon
1/3 cup of freshly grated parmesan

directions

Get a freezer bag, put in the potatoes unpeeled but diced, about 1/2-inch square, maybe slightly smaller sometimes, throw chopped garlic after them and then add 2 tablespoons olive oil. (When I'm in a hurry, I forget the garlic and use garlic-infused oil instead.) Shake the bag about, so the oil disperses and covers all the cubes of potato. Empty them onto a baking pan and then roast them for 45 minutes to 1 hour in a 400° F oven. When they're glistening brown, lay them on some paper towels and sprinkle with coarse sea salt. You don't want them to go on the salad when hot, so let them cool for about 10 minutes.

Put some water on for the eggs, put a matchstick into the pan (this stops the white flowing out if the shell cracks) and then--when boiling--lower in the eggs and boil for exactly 1 minute. Remove and set aside.

Tear the romaine leaves into eatable sizes and toss with olive oil to coat well but lightly. Sprinkle in the salt and several grinds of pepper and toss again. Shake in about 6 drops of the Worcestershire sauce, drizzle in the lemon juice, break in the eggs and toss to blend. Correct the seasoning. Toss with the cheese and then with the potato croutons at the very last minute, as you bring it to the table and no sooner, or the salad will wilt.

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